

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

July 16, 2008

**What's Inside:**

Policy Revisions on  
Birth Control  
Consent for Foster  
Children

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS AND  
CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: PAULA NEESE, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: BIRTH CONTROL CONSENT FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER  
CARE

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform staff of Child Welfare Manual policy revisions regarding the Children's Service Workers' (CSW) role in addressing birth control and sexual health issues with foster children.

The CSW, upon intake of a child into foster care, should gather as much information about the child as possible, including sexual health information. While children may be reluctant to share this information with their worker, it is essential that the worker attempt to gather thorough and accurate information from the child about their sexual health and their contraceptive practices. This information should be gathered in a manner sensitive to each individual child's physical and emotional maturity, taking into full account the difficulty a child may have sharing or discussing this information with the worker.

The CSW should make extensive efforts to involve the parents in sexual health decisions. Efforts made to encourage the child to discuss sexual health decisions and contraception with his/her parents as well as the worker's efforts to involve the parents in these decisions should be documented. When attempts to involve the parents have been unsuccessful and/or parental consent cannot be obtained for a child to receive birth control, the CSW should involve the Family Support Team (FST). If the FST reaches a conclusion which is not consistent with the wishes of the parent, the CSW shall seek court approval for the child to use birth control. The CSW shall **not** in any circumstance give verbal or written consent for a child to receive birth control without the approval of the parent, the parent and FST, or the Court. Directives given by the Court to handle birth control consent or sexual health decisions in any manner contrary to this policy should be followed and documented in the record.

The CSW shall discuss issues related to birth control, sexual health and sexually transmitted diseases equally with male and female foster children on a case by case

basis as appropriate. Many youth may be more comfortable discussing their sexual health with a worker of the same gender. Co-workers can assist each other in these situations.

**NECESSARY ACTIONS:**

1. Please review this memorandum with all Children's Division Staff.
2. All questions should be cleared through normal supervisory channels and directed to:

**PDS CONTACT:**  
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**CHILD WELFARE MANUAL REVISIONS:**

Section 4 Chapter 24.2. [Medical Information to be Obtained when Child Enters Care](#)

**COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA) STANDARDS:**  
[S21.5.03](#)